

Exhibit A

Aron Melber





Honorable Kenneth M. Karas
300 Quarropas St.
Courtroom 521
White Plains, NY 10601-4150

October 21, 2020

Honorable Judge Karas,

I am deeply and humbly sorry for the crime I committed. I will work tirelessly to try and make amends for it, and I will carry the shame of my criminal conduct for the rest of my days. My reckless decisions risked everything I care about: my family, my students, my reputation as an educator in the Hasidic community.


 We were left to fend for ourselves. All I wanted after living through those hard times was to help other children have smoother happier childhoods than I did. I know I failed them in my conduct here.

My crime has harmed innocent students and risked the futures of many more. I agreed to receive Erate money for my school that should have gone to help other students who needed the technology. My crime harmed other underprivileged children whose schools deserved to receive that Erate funding. And now, because of my crime, my students at Imrei Shufer could also lose their school and the special opportunities that only Imrei Shufer provides in the Hasidic community.

After volunteering at the school for a few years, I first started working at Imrei Shufer at the end of 2013 when the old principal suddenly moved out of the neighborhood, leaving the school on the verge of collapsing. This school had been a savior for my son during his time of need, and I stupidly risked it all. I have poured my soul and heart into Imrei Shufer, to create an environment that prioritizes caring and educating each and every student. Imrei Shufer is committed to accepting every child, especially those who are rejected by other Hasidic schools because of their disabilities, their special needs, because they were found to be “problems” in the classroom, or due to family circumstances. I, and the other educators at the school, work twice as hard to make sure we can meet each child’s needs with extra help, tutoring, attention, and care. Imrei Shufer holds a special place in my heart because I took my son out of a bad place in another religious school and found a safe place for him. No school in my community has done more for those who are rejected or mistreated because they are different. I want to build on what

we have achieved here, and ask the Court for forgiveness to allow me to continue to help the underprivileged students in my school.

I know my conduct risked the school's future. I have taken steps to remove myself from the business of the school. I have already stepped down from the school's financial administration and agree not to have any input on the operations. I want to help the children where I can, as a counselor, tutor and helper in the classroom. I cannot help but think that my conduct in this case hurt the place I dedicated my life's work to. I don't know that I can bare losing the school. Most importantly, Judge, the school needs to carry on because of the parents and students that rely on it as a safe place. I am so sorry that my wrong and rash decisions risked the many years of work I have put in to help Imrei Shufer and my students.

My heart breaks when I think that my actions have also risked destabilizing my family – that I could now be separated from my children and my wonderful wife Rivka, in the middle of this awful pandemic that has already caused them to suffer so much. My wife's father died of COVID-19 in March, my own mother has been on a ventilator for more than six months, and my father, brother and several other relatives have all been hospitalized because of this health crisis. My children are scared and stressed, and now because of my own terrible mistakes, they could lose my support too.

Your Honor, I understand how deeply wrong my actions were. I deserve whatever punishment the Court imposes. My only wish is that I have an opportunity to truly make amends for my mistakes, which have hurt so many. As a start, for the last several months since the lockdowns in the spring, I have been tutoring Hasidic children suffering from isolation and depression. I know this is only a small step. But I hope Your Honor will see fit to allow me to stay with my children who depend on me during this dark time, which will give me the chance to continue working at Imrei Shufer and helping the many struggling students who need a caring mentor.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aron Melber', with a stylized, flowing script.

Aron Melber